## A Christmas Suggestion.

Ye merry hearts that meet to laugh and dance
the hours away,
Ye gentle hearts that better love in sheltered
homes to pray,
Think on the homes whose Christmas guests
are only want and care,
Think on the hearts too sad for mirth, too sad
perchance for prayer.

Oh! sad and short the wintry days; oh! sad
and long the night,
When in the heart there is no hope, and in
the house no light;
No fire, no food! Yet goodly gifts, yet words
of Christian cheer
Can make the grave seem further off—can
make the heavens more near.

## Santa Claus's Wife.

A jolly old lady is Santa Claus's spouse,
As every good soul that has seen her allows.
She has silvery hair, but her eye of bright
blue
Is still clear and undimmed spite the years
she's passed through.

Her face is so fresh, and so plump is her form,
Her voice is so sweet, and her heart is so
warm,
That it's hard to believe when one sometimes
is told
Mrs. S. will be shortly two thousand years old

She is homelike and quiet and spends all her
time
From the sunset of Christmas till Christmas
Eve's chime,
In cutting and stitching from morning to
night
On presents to make the next Christmas-tide
bright.
She knits and embroiders and crochets to
send us
Each gift, sometimes simple and sometimes
stupendous;
But they all bear the stamp of her dear good
old heart,
Which makes them more precious than great
works of art.

A noble old lady is dear Mrs. S.,
And that I have loved her I freely confess;
For who could resist her kind sweetness of
soul,
Or the mirth in her eyes when they laughing-
ly roll,
Or her soft words of comfort when you're
melancholy,
Or her flashes of wit when you feel gay and
jolly?
O Santa Claus, you are a lucky old boy,
For you have in your good wife a fountain of
joy!

## A PAIR OF CRUTCHES.

Guesswheretown was in a state of great excitement, one afternoon last winter—the afternoon of the day before Christmas. Copies of a wonderful proclamation had been posted up at the corners of the principal streets, flung down areas, shoved under doors, and distributed in all the public schools; and this is how they read:

*To my beloved children, greeting:*

I, Santa Claus, otherwise known as St. Nicholas, and Kriss Kringle, having, on Christmas Eve, for more years than you would care to count, filled little stockings and shoes with goodies, and left in all convenient places many gifts for small people, now call upon all who remember my visits in years gone by, for some return of the favors I have bestowed. From every child who loves me, I expect, to-night, a present. I care not how small it may be, or what it may be. In my wide kingdom can be found use for any thing and every thing. And knowing that my dear children will respond quickly and cheerfully, and that the gifts will be many more than would fill both my stockings, I request that each church of this town receive and retain them until further orders from me.

With much love,
I hereby affix my hand and seal,
SANTA CLAUS.

Such a hurrying to and fro of eager, bright-eyed children, as there was, that Christmas Eve, though the streets were filled with snow and the snow still falling! Babies toddling along with toys—some of them sadly battered and broken, it must be confessed—for "dood ole Zante Caws;" boys with books and balls and cast-off jackets, and coats, and hats, and a hundred other things; girls with more books, and dolls, and little aprons, and mittens, and dresses, and a hundred and fifty other things; bakers' children with loaves of bread and cake; shoemakers' children with shoes; toy merchants' children with toys; confectioners' children with candies and fruits; grocers' children with tea, sugar, raisins, figs, rice and potatoes. On they all trooped, laughing and singing, carrying "any thing and every thing," as the proclamation read.

How jolly it was to see them pressing into the different churches with their offerings, and laying them up on the long tables, over each of which was hung the inscription, printed in fat letters, made of evergreen and bright red berries, "Christmas Gifts from the Children to Santa Claus."

But one poor little boy, in a poor little room of a poor little house, in a poor little street of Guesswheretown, sat by the side of a poor little widow, his poor little mother, disconsolate and forlorn. "In yeaths gone by," he said—he was an old-fashioned chap, and spoke with a lisp—"when father wath alive, Thanta Clauth wath very good to me. He didn't give me any thing lath Chrithmath, but I thuppothe it wath becauthe he didn't know where we'd move—tho' that wathn't hith fault. And here," looking wistfully at a copy of the proclammation which lay on the table before him, "I can't give him a thing, we're tho ex-treme-ly poor."

Then a sudden thought struck him: "My crutcheth—they're a nith pair; and now that I'm all well except a ex-treme-ly little limp, I can ther-tain-ly do without them. Mother, do you think he'd laugh at them, or ith it poth-j-ble that he hath a little boy or girl that ith lame?"

"It is just possible, my darling," said the poor little mother, looking into the serious dark eyes, with a fond smile. "Anyhow, I'm sure he wouldn't laugh at them."

"Then hurry up, mother, or we'll be late," he said, eagerly jumping from his chair, and running quickly, in spite of his limp, to the corner where hung his hat. "It's near 9 o'clock. We'll take them to the church around the corner—not the big one, but the little one—where poor folks can go."

Wrapping the little fellow in an old shawl—he had no overcoat, and his jacket was a summer one—the poor little mother took him by the hand, and away they trudged through the cold street, with the tiny pair of crutches.

Behold! Christmas morning, another proclamation:

*Santa Claus, otherwise known as Kriss Kringle, and St. Nicholas, to his thrice-beloved children, greeting:*

Thanks for the many useful and beautiful things you have brought me, and now, I beg you, grant me one more wish, and then farewell for another year. Go all you happy little ones who have never known want and sorrow, into the poor streets and alleys, and, with kind words and bright smiles, ask the thin, half-clad, half-starved children who live there in hovels and tenement-houses, and who have known want and sorrow all their lives, to come, to-night, to the churches, where my presents are displayed. Then on each one bestow what he or she most needs or wishes for, and so will this day prove, my darlings, to be the merriest and happiest of all Christmas Days. For truly it is said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

With much love,
I hereby affix my hand and seal,
SANTA CLAUS.

It was done, and the children, rich and poor, flocked from all quarters of the city into the brilliantly lighted, beautifully decorated churches. The little church around the corner was filled to overflowing. Ladies in costly garments mingled with women in faded calico dresses, and ragged shawls. Children clad in silks, velvet and rich furs sat beside pale little ones who had shivered in their thin dresses, as they came through the streets. But the blessed influence of the holy Christmas time was over them all.

A prayer from the good minister, and then a sweet-faced, sweet-voiced lady arose and said:

"Little strangers—but from this time, we hope, strangers no more—you have been invited here, to-night, by Santa Claus. The children of this church, grateful for the many things he has bestowed upon them in years gone by, have, this day, sent him many gitfs in return. But he, not having any boys or girls of his own, wishes his Christmas presents should be given te you. Here are candies, apples, cakes and oranges enough for you all"—how their eyes sparkled—"and books, dolls, shoes, hats and many other things, to be divided among you. Come forward, a few at a time, and whisper to me, or one of my friends, what most you wish for."

Shyly they came, with wondering, half-doubting faces, but to return to their seats, with bright eyes and smiles—hands, pockets and aprons filled with treasures, until all had partaken of the bounty of Santa Claus.

But one beautiful little girl, with heavenly blue eyes, and golden hair rippling to her waist, never moved, but sat upon her mother's knee, looking wonderfully about her. The children who had to pass her to reach their seats threw candies and nuts and cake into her lap, as they passed, and she gave them in return the sweetest of smiles.

At last nothing remained of the presents to Santa Claus but the little pair of crutches.

"No one wanth them," whispered the small boy, who, with a nice, warm jacket upon his arm, and an orange in one hand and a box of figs in the other, sat beside his mother. "I'm tho thorry—no! I'm tho ex-treme-ly glad no other poor child ith lame."

But just then the sweet-voiced lady said, in a still, soft voice, "And here is a pair of little crutches."

The woman who was holding the pretty wee girl arose, and, carrying the child in her arms, came modestly forward.

Oh! what a lovely, lovely face that child had! Wan and thin, but lit up by eyes large, bright and blue, and her hair shone and glistened in the brilliant light like a mass of purest gold.

Her mother stood upon the floor, and, taking the crutches, placed them under her arms. "I thank Santa Claus very much," said the child, in a clear, musical voice. "Mamma couldn't afford to buy me a pair, and I had to sit in my chair, all day long."

"Mother, she lookth like an angel! I muth kith her," said the small boy; and forgetful of the large crowd—of every thing but the beautiful child—he limped toward her. "Will you kith me, dear little child?" he said.

"Yes," said the child, with a frank smile, "for I think," looking straight into his serious, dark eyes, "you are my Santa Claus."

And then a great shout went up for Santa Claus.

"We'll give him a present every Chistmas," cried all the children.

"Three cheers for the dear old fellow!"

And didn't they cheer!

"Hurrah! Hurrah!! Hurrah!!!" and one for good measure, "Hurrah!!!!"

## Plevna Fallen.

After a five months' siege, illustrated by several heavy attacks and a heroic defense, Plevna has fallen into the hands of the Czar, and the starving army of Osman Pasha has surrendered to the far more powerful army by which it was encompassed.

The doom of Plevna has for some time been inevitable. Osman Pasha's army was unable of itself to raise the siege. When first shut up its strength was about 60,000, while the besieging force was twice as strong. The Turkish force has been terribly weakened during these months by famine and disease, while the Russian army has constantly been receiving re-enforcements, and has had an abundance of all kinds of supplies. One of the ablest of modern military engineers, Gen. Todleben, had command of the besieging host, and no skill or audacity on the part of any commander inside of Plevna had a chance of coping with the power that Todleben wielded against it. The only hope of relief for the garrison of Plevna lay in the movements of the armies that operated outside of it, under Suleiman Pasha and Mehemet Ali. But, in every attempt to advance toward the Russian lines, these armies found themselves confronted by superior bodies of the invaders, and for some months past Suleiman Pasha's efforts have been feeble and useless, while Mehemet Ali, doubtless feeling aggrieved over his treatment by the Sultan, has done little more than call for re-enforcements and complain of his inability to make any movement until he got them.

When the Russians laid siege to Plevna, they anticipated its capture by a *coup de force*. Their first heavy attack, last July, was brilliantly repulsed by the Turks; and so confounded were the Russians by the staggering blow they received, that it took them six weeks to recover from it. In September, they made a more desperate attack with a much larger force; but again they were driven back, and so immense was the slaughter that all further attempts of the kind were given up. Todleben was then put in charge of the siege, and he proceeded to make a close and regular investment of Plevna, with the object of reducing it in that way. For three months the investment had been complete. Prior to that time supplies had been sent to Osman Pasha from the region between Sophia and Widdin; but neither food nor munitions has he had since then. On one occasion he made an attempt to force a passage, but failed, and on another occasion a large supply train was captured by the Russians as it approached Plevna. After this there was nothing for him to do but hold out for the relief that he expected from Suleiman Pasha and Mehemet Ali; but, as this never reached him, and as he had at last to give up all hope of it, and as his army was rapidly perishing by hunger, cold, and disease, he made a final desperate attempt on Sunday last to break the Russian lines in the direction of Widdin. The enemy knew he would have to come to this; they fell on him, front, flank, and rear; and, before the close of the day, his famished army, which had probably dwindled to one-half its original strength, was compelled to surrender.

This is, in reality, the first important Russian victory in a war which has lasted for nine months. It has been a costly victory to the invaders, whose losses in the various operations of the year are officially reported at nearly one hundred thousand men.

There is no noubt that the Czar will now seek to enter into negotiations with the Sultan to secure peace. He will try to show the Sultan that the continuance of hostilities must result in further disasters to his empire. The terms which the Czar has been willing to offer, under the circumstances that have now been brought about, have recently been published; but they are such as the Sultan can not accept, and he must struggle against them until the Russians win far greater victories than that of Plevna. The Russo-Turkish war now enters upon a stage in which it is full of danger to the peace of Europe.—*New York Sun.*

## A TERRIBLE CRIME.

**The Abduction and Horrible Treatment of a Beautiful Young Girl—Taken from Her Father's House, Disguised and Chloroformed, to a Strange Place Forty Miles Away—A Prisoner Four Days.**

[From the New York Sun.]

Much excitement has existed in Westport, Conn., for several days past, over developments in the case of Miss Fannie Burt, daughter of Mr. Charles Burt, a respectable resident of the place, and who was abducted and outraged by unknown persons. Mr. Burt is a retired carman, and lives in a neat little two-story cottage, surrounded by evergreens, on the road midway between Westport Station and Westport. His nearest neighbor, Amos Barnes, lives in a larger and more showy edifice on the other side of the way, about a hundred yards from Burt. Enmity, growing out of a lawsuit, has existed between the two for some years past, a fact which, in the minds of many of the neighbors, has a direct bearing on what follows. The reputation of the Barnes family is not savory. The house for some years past has been the resort of questionable persons from New York.

On the afternoon of the day after Thanksgiving Miss Burt, who, although fully 16, is almost a child in appearance, sat in the dining-room of her father's house with her nephew, aged about 2 years. It was half-past 1 o'clock in the afternoon, and her father, who was building a stone fence for Mr. David Morgan, a neighbor, was expected home in a few minutes. There were at least five inhabited houses within a quarter of a mile, and persons were constantly passing on the road. Steps were heard on the piazza and a knock at the door. She opened it, and two men, one tall and light complexioned, and the other short and dark, entered. At the door stood a covered carriage harnessed to a single white horse. The men asked for a drink of water. The girl rose, drew the water from a well at the back of the house, poured it into a tumbler, and handed it to the shorter of the two men. Suddenly her arms were seized and pinned together from behind, a handkerchief saturated with chloroform was held to her nose, and she fell helpless into her captor's arms.

The men deliberately stripped the clothing from her, and dressed her in a suit of men's clothing they had with them, muffling her up in her father's overcoat, which they found hanging behind the door, lifted her into the wagon, and drove away, passing at one time within hail of the father at his work.

On Friday evening, 36 hours afterward, the girl awoke to consciousness in a darkened room on the outskirts of New Britain, Conn., 36 miles away. Here her captors forced her to drink drugged whisky, from the effects of which she lay in a semi-unconscious state for several days. While in this condition her captors repeatedly assaulted her, and even added blows and drunken abuse to their other vile treatment. The room in which she was confined was darkened by green shades, and contained only a lounge and two chairs. Her food was cold turkey and chicken. The men talked very little, and were generally in the room with her together. They told her that Charlie Barnes, son of the Barnes already mentioned, had, out of spite, put them up to what they had done. At times they went out and locked the door, leaving her alone for hours. She had no notion of the time, the room being almost as dark in the daytime as at night.

After four days of this treatment they released her, having first cut off her hair short like a boy's, and charged her not to tell any one of what they had done, on pain of further violence. They also told her that she had better speak to no one, as it was a criminal offense for a girl to be found in male attire, and she would certainly be sent to State-prison if discovered.

Half crazed with anxiety, drugged with liquor, and stupefied with inhuman treatment, the poor girl did as she was bid, and quit the house, without even taking notice of its appearance. She wandered about in the fields until the smoke of a passing locomotive showed her the way to the railroad track. She read the name of the station "New Britain," on the signboard, and kept on down the track toward New Haven.

For three days and nights she continued her journey through New Haven and down along the shore road toward home, without daring to speak to any one, or even to ask for any thing to eat. She passed a few tramps, but she was bundled up in her father's overcoat, and with her hair cut they had no suspicion of who she was.

At 2 o'clock on last Saturday afternoon she arrived in sight of home, but did not dare to pass the Barnes's house for fear of further maltreatment. She lingered about until nightfall, and then crept into her father's house. Mrs. Burt was at the door, and had great difficulty in recognizing in the pale, sunken face, the shorn locks, and outlandish attire the bright, cheerful girl of a few days before. The poor mother almost fainted when she realized the truth. The father refused for some time to believe that it was his daughter.

Every effort was made to discover and identify the perpetrators of the crime, but without success. Mr. Burt remembered seeing some one resembling the younger of the two around the Barnes's house a few days before, but he was not certain. Inquiries at the livery-stable and the village and among people round about failed to elicit any new facts.

Mr. Burt, although a poor man, has offered a reward of $100 for the discovery of the men. He has communicated to one of his sons residing in this city certain facts which indicate who were the real instigators of the outrage, and these facts will be given to Superintendent Walling immediately. There is very little doubt in Westport that the men were from New York, having gone up to Barnes's house to spend Thanksgiving.

Barnes has pursued a devious calling, having been a fisherman, a digger of clams, and a saloon proprietor in Westport.

Mr. Burt has always been reputed to be an honest man and a good citizen. Against Fannie no one has ever said a word. She has always been of a shy and retiring disposition, and in every way the reverse of forward. She was an attendant at the Methodist Church of Westport, and a member of its Sunday-school.

The lawsuit which was the cause of the ill-feeling between Barnes and Burt grew out of a disputed title to an old well between their premises. The feud became a bitter one, and for years members of the two families had not spoken to those of the other.

## How Cigars Are Made.

Men grow hobbyish about cigars as they do about watches, and pictures and engravings, and other things about which the imagination associates more excellences and perfections than they really possess, and find in them flavors and meanings and sentiments which ordinary people are not able to discover. But there is another side to the picture. If they understood how cigars are made in New York and other American cities; if they knew that nine-tenths of their Havanas are given color and flavor by the art of the chemist, and that the fillings are often nothing but the refuse of Cuban tobacco; if they could look into the tenement houses where the manufacture is carried on, amid squalor and disease, into rooms where families are crowded, and cooking, washing, ironing, and the cleaning of children are carried on—the tobacco shaken out and hung up to dry side by side with the linen from the wash, and saturated, so to speak, with the vapor and foul air of unventilated rooms—all this would be well calculated to disturb his philosophy and give to his meditations a ghastly suggestion of small-pox, measles, diphtheria, fever, and other infectious and contagious diseases. Yet the picture, unpleasant and disagreeable as it is, does not exaggerate the facts. Since the strike among the cigar-makers in New York there have been strange disclosures made by the makers through the public prints of the way the business is managed. It is more profitable to the manufacturers to have the work done by their employees living in overcrowded tenement-houses than to rent or build factories, and have to pay the many incidental expenses of keeping up large establishments. The chemist, too, is largely instrumental in producing cigars of the best quality. At trifling cost he can color the tobacco any shade required by the market, from the most delicate seal-skin brown to the darker shades of perrique, and for aroma he can deceive the elect with odors like those of the best Havana. He defies the skill of the expert, and the keen analysis of the connoisseur. This "Havana flavor," we are told, is secured by putting into the filling one-eighth part of refuse Cuba, the other seven-eighths being our native product, and leaving the rest of the work to the chemist.—*Cincinnati Commercial.*

"LEONORA," he said, and his low, pleading tones were brimmed with boiling passion, "can you love me? Will you be mine? May I hope? Shall I tear the loved image from my bosom? Must I surrender thee? Might I look forward to a joyous day when——" and he paused, satisfied with the mess of verbs he had spilled all over the carpet. The young girl gazed at him sadly and tenderly; then flushed to her swimming eyes, and, opening her peach-bloom mouth, she said, hesitatingly, "Alfred, what sized pocket-book do you wear?"

IN England, last year, 243 persons went mad from love. Of these, 191 were women.